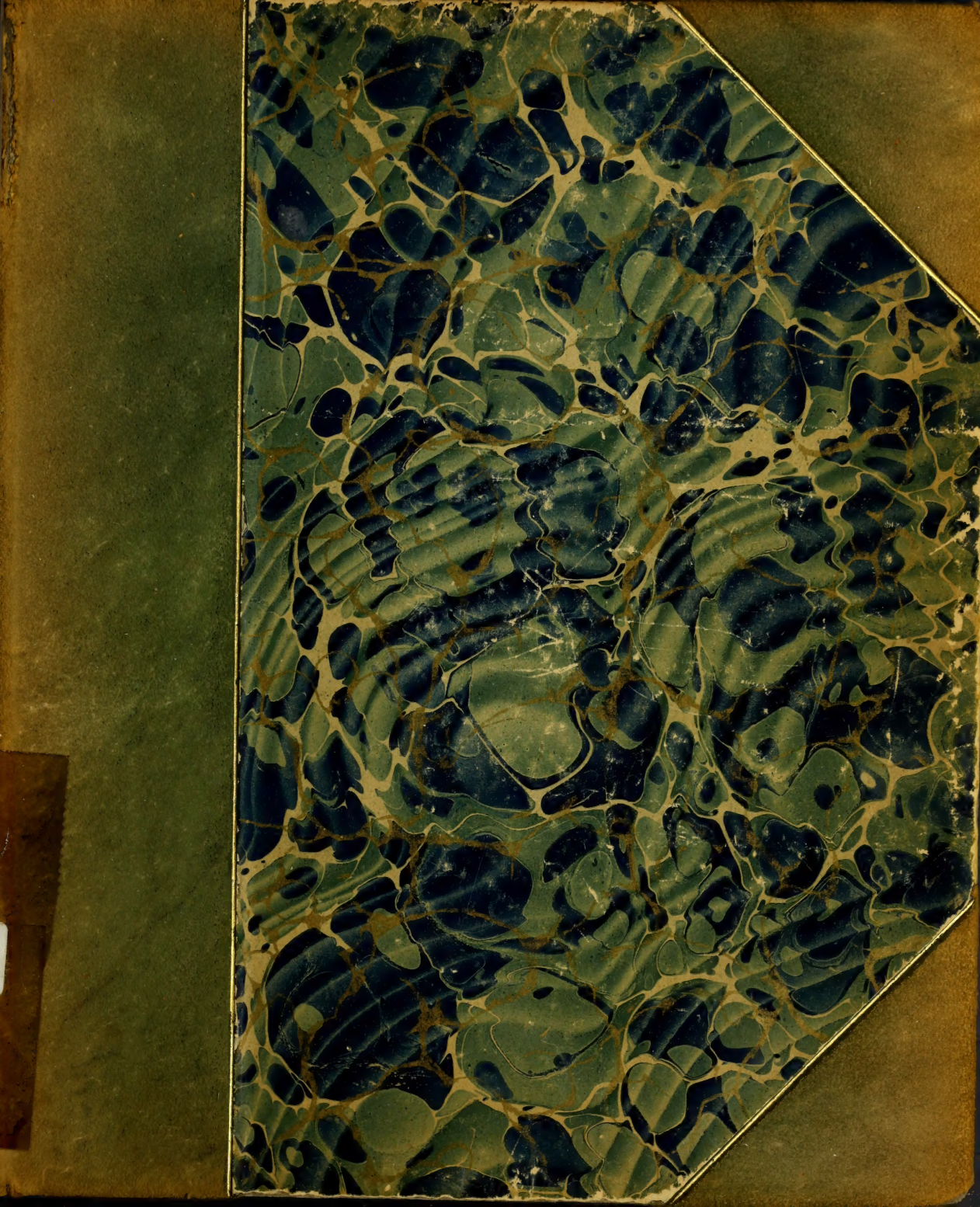
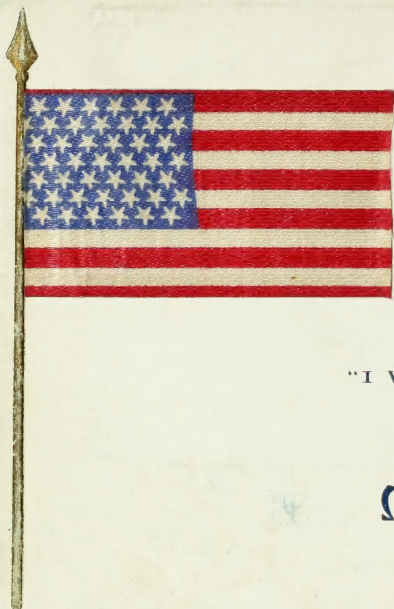






1802 ——— 1902

DEBORAH SAMPSON DINNER

TOWN HALL, SHARON

THURSDAY EVE., APRIL 3,
1902

"I WAS THERE"

Menu



Oysters en Coquile

Tomato Pottage aux Crotans

Filet de Sole à la Tartare

ROAST

Turkey farcé

Cranberry Sauce

Pomme de Terre Puré

Mashed Turnips en form

Filet de Boeuf aux Champignons

Bananas Beignets aux Vin la Rose

SALADS

Poulet en Mayonnaise

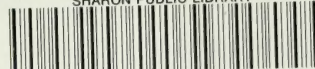
Homard à la Windsor

Gateaux Assorted

Ice Cream

Tutti Frutti

Café Noir



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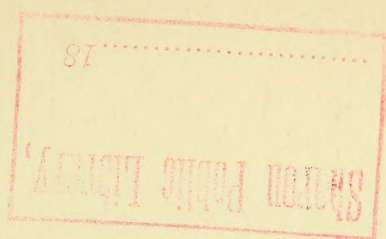
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Deborah Sampson Gannett

Dinner

in the

Town Hall, Sharon,

Massachusetts,

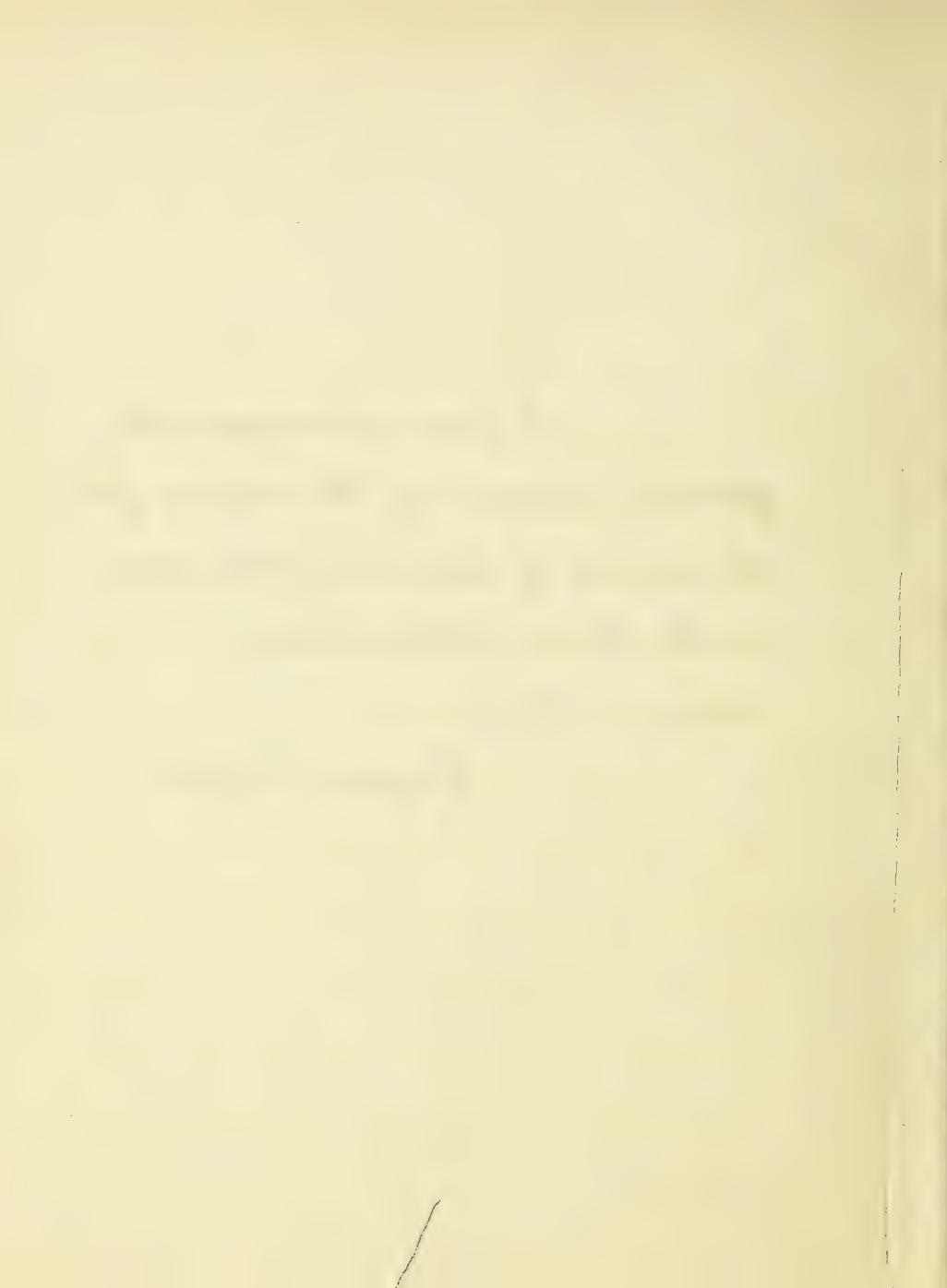
April 3, 1902

SH  
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Sam  
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I have arranged the  
following account of the dinner for  
the purpose of depositing the same  
in the Sharon Public Library.

May 17, 1902.

Eugene Tappan.



In commemoration of the successful lecturing tour made by Mrs. Deborah Sampson Gannett in the year 1802, a dinner was served in the town hall in Sharon, Massachusetts, in the evening of April 3, 1902.

The mention of Deborah Sampson has usually recalled only her patriotic service as a Continental soldier in the Revolutionary army. But the special purpose of the dinner was to bring more fully to notice the fact that Mrs. Gannett was an early

woman lecturer.

In the spring following the discharge of Deborah Sampson as a soldier, she was married to Benjamin Gannett of Sharon, and continued for more than forty years to live in that town until her death in 1827. All at once in the year 1802, Mrs. Gannett emerged from her quiet life as a farmer's wife and stood on the stage of Federal Street theatre in Boston to deliver an address on her life in the army. Her appearance was announced as follows in the *Columbian Centinel* of March 20, 1802.

"Federal Street Theatre.

The public are respectfully informed that

Mrs. Gannett, the American Heroine, who served three years as a private soldier in the Continental Army during the war, will at the request of a number of respectable persons, make her appearance on the stage this evening, for the purpose of relating her narrative."

In the same newspaper for March 24, 1802, is the advertisement that "Mrs. Gannett late Deborah Sampson" will "make her second appearance on the stage this evening." She had a benefit night March 29. "Federal Street Theatre. For the benefit of Mrs. Gannett. Being positively her last appearance on the stage." "End of the play Mrs. Gannett will relate her Narrative". "Mrs. Gannett, equipt in complete uniform, will go through

the manual exercise. The whole to conclude with the song and chorus of 'God save the sixteen States'."

The address thus delivered was published the same year "at the request of the audiences" in a pamphlet of 30 pages. A copy is in the library of the Dedham Historical Society. The title page says, "An Address, delivered with applause, At the Federal-Street Theatre, Boston, four successive nights of the different plays, beginning March 22, 1802; and after, at other principal towns, a number of nights successively at each place; By Mrs. Deborah Gannet, the American Heroine, who severed three years with reputation (undiscovered as a female)

in the late American Army." Dedham :  
Printed and sold by H. Mann for Mrs. Gannet,  
at the Minerva Office, - 1802."

The "introduction" begins, "The character and achievements of Mrs. Gannet, late Deborah Sampson, the American Heroine, have excited much curiosity in the United States. At the close of the revolution she retired to an obscure part of Massachusetts, selected, or rather was selected a partner of an industrious farmer". Mention is then made of her wish "to revisit some of the principal places which were the theatre of her personating the soldier", and "honorably to enhance the pecuniary interest of her family, which she is said industriously

to economize". "Under the superintendence of Messrs. Powell and Harper, she was ushered on to the stage in a very polite manner, where before a crowded assembly, perfectly unabashed, she very audibly recited her narration". "An attendant has since introduced her to the audience by the following prospectus". Then follow ten lines of verse ending with

"E'en Britain's Fair, though proud, this  
truth must own —  
When Liberty's at stake, a Female  
storms the Throne."

The address begins with a statement of reasons for appearing in public. The spirit of enterprise and the

solicitations of friends induced her "to rehearse a tale of truth." After referring to criticism on her enlisting as a soldier, she says, "I indeed recollect it as a foible, an error and presumption into which, perhaps, I have too inadvertently and precipitately run; but which I now retrospect with anguish and amazement." "And yet I must frankly confess I recollect it with a kind of satisfaction". "You can behold the parched soil of White Plains drink insatiate the blood of her most peaceful and industrious proprietors. — I was there! The recollection makes me shudder! A dislocated limb draws fresh anguish from my heart!" "Nor need

I point you to the death-like doors of the hospital in Philadelphia whose avenues were crowded with the sick, the dying and the dead; though myself made one of the unhappy crowd! "

"I am indeed willing to acknowledge what I have done an error and presumption. — Had all this been achieved by the rougher hand, more properly assigned to wield the sword in duty and danger in a defensive war — these thorns might have been converted into wreaths of immortal glory and fame. I therefore yield every claim of honor and distinction to the hero and patriot who met the foe in his own name."

More than half of the address is apologetic. Mrs. Gannett was probably assisted in its composition, for the introduction states that she "procured" it.

On May 5, 1802, Mrs. Gannett delivered her address in Amidon's Hall in Providence, Rhode Island. The bills of her performance were printed and posted in the most public places in the town. She left her home, July 3, 1802, for a prolonged lecturing tour. Her son, Earl Bradford Gannett, accompanied her to Medfield, which was her first stopping place. From there she went to Sudbury, Worcester, Holden, Brookfield, Springfield,

Northampton and Pittsfield. In New York she visited Albany, Schenectady, Ballston and Hudson, and made special effort to go to Lisle in Broome county. Here resided her old army friend, major general John Paterson.

These and other facts appear in a diary kept by Mrs. Gannett and still in existence, though never published. A manuscript copy of the diary with illustrations and notes is in the Sharon public library. In Albany mention is made of lecture expenses, \$2.00 paid to the old key keeper, \$3.00 to Mr. Barber for printing, \$1.34 to Mr. Lester for filling blank and finding candles, 48 cents for sweeping

the Court house, 20 cents for cleaning the candle sticks, and 17 cents for brushing the seats. For her oration in Northampton she received \$17.00. She wrote a letter home August 21 accompanied with one hundred dollars, "which I hope my family will make a good use of." The last entry in the diary is under date of January 6, 1803 in New York, "Sent for Dr. Huntington. My fever is seated on me." It is not known whether Mrs. Gannett ever lectured again.

It is to be noted that Mrs. Deborah Sampson Gannett was perhaps the first woman to go about from place to place and earn money as a public

lecturer. She quickly achieved distinction and success. She was her own agent, attended to advertising, and to posting bills, made money, paid her own way and sent generously to her family in Sharon. One would have thought that this famous lecturing tour would have often been spoken of in the family, and the account told from generation to generation, that there would be a place for its narrative in the not infrequent biographical notices of Mrs. Bennett, and a decided and full tradition about it in Sharon; but such has not been the case. This shows that the mere absence of tradition may have little weight in the decision of a fact.

It is, however, interesting to know why there is an absence of tradition about this lecturing tour. The explanation is offered that Mrs. Gannett was in advance of her time, and her leaving home and family to ride about the country and deliver an oration upon the public platform was not according to the taste of her neighbors and friends. She, therefore, would not care to say much about the matter.

Mrs. Eunice Lyon Gay, living on Depot street in Sharon, is the widow of George Washington Gay, a grandson of Mrs. Gannett. He was ten years old when his grandmother died, and remembered her

well, having often visited her. He was accustomed to treasure up what appeared from time to time in print concerning Mrs. Gannett, was fond of her, and provided in his will for a permanent memorial of her. Yet Mrs. Gay was surprised to learn a few months ago that Mrs. Gannett had ever delivered a public lecture, and was quite sure that her late husband had never mentioned the fact, and did not know it.

A former resident of Sharon intimate with the Gannett family, writes, "I was well acquainted with Mrs. Holmes, a grand daughter of Mrs. Gannett. She told me among other facts that her grandmother, during all the years that she knew her, was very sensitive to any al-

lusions even to her life as a soldier, and was very unwilling to speak of it. If then in 1802 she regarded that part of her life with approval, it is certain, as Mrs. Holmes told me, that in later years she did not regard her disguising herself as a man a womanly or a truthful act."

The school children would tease Mrs. Gannett's grand daughters by calling after them, "your grandmother was a soldier." One of the granddaughters now living remembers vividly the intended ridicule, and is unwilling to talk much about Deborah Sampson even to her family.

In order, therefore, to bring

to light the facts relating to Deborah Sampson Gannett's efforts as a public lecturer and to listen to sympathetic speakers, the centennial dinner was planned.

After several articles on the subject had been published in the Sharon Advocate, a meeting of citizens was called, and a committee was chosen to do the work. The members of the committee were Eugene Tappan, Frank E. Burbank, Timothy F. Quinn, Mrs. Edward H. Warren and Loring M. Monk.

A circular was prepared, a copy of which is annexed to this account. The cut of Deborah Sampson

was specially made after the portrait published by Herman Mann in 1797 in the frontispiece to "The Female Review" (a kind of romance, with Deborah Sampson for its subject).

W. K. Howe of Hyde Park was engaged as caterer. The menu card is annexed. It is said to be the first time in Sharon that a dinner of this sort was served for one hundred persons in the main town hall. The cooking facilities in the town house being inadequate, Mr. Quinn lent his kitchen for the purpose in his house across the street. Some new tables were built. Bushrod Morse

Esquire generously supplied dining chairs.

The hall was prettily decorated with American flags hung from the walls. Potted plants filled the front of the stage. The following names of noted women were conspicuously displayed, viz. Anne Hutchinson, Hannah Dustin, Deborah Sampson, Mary Lyon - being women who did something noteworthy and out of the common course. There were also on the walls a portrait of Martha Washington, engraving of Betsey Ross making the first Union flag, and a picture of Sharon village in 1849.

A long table was placed near the stage and parallel to it. Three

other tables extended down the hall at right angles to the first table. The orchestra was on the stage and consisted of a pianist, violinist and cornetist.

The day and evening of April 3 were pleasant. The guests met in the lower rooms of the building at a reception at 6-30 in the evening. Soon after 7 o'clock, they went in procession to the upper main hall and took seats at the tables. Grace was said by Rev. Almon J. Dyer. The serving of the courses occupied an hour, while music was performed by the orchestra.

Following is a list of the names of the persons present.

Martha M. Allen, Walpole.  
wife of M. W. A.

Melzar Waterman Allen, Walpole.  
builder.

Abel T. Barnes, High St., Sharon.  
mechanical engineer.

John A. Bowman, Walnut St.  
real estate agent.

Miss Winnibel Bowman, " "  
daughter of J. A. B.

Franklin G. Bullard, Depot St.  
town treasurer.

Frank E. Burbank, South Pleasant St.  
secretary Co-Op. Bank

Mrs. Frank E. Burbank, " " "  
Mrs. Emily J. Burbank, Boston.

W. Chapin Burbank, Boston.

Edward W. Callan, Oakland Road, Sharon.

Miss Susan Callan, " " "

George C. Chisholm, " " "

real estate agent.

Mrs. George C. Chisholm

Calvin S. Coggins, " South Main St.  
builder.

Calvin S. Coggins, " " "  
son of C. S. C.

Arthur D. Colburn, Depot St.  
of Petter & Colburn.

Mrs. Emma P. Colburn, " "  
wife of A. D. C.

A. Presby Colburn, " "  
son of A. D. C.

Alexander Corbett Jr. Globe reporter, Boston.

David H. bowell, Boston.

son of E. T. C. & gr. gr. grandson of Deborah.

Edwin T. bowell, Boston.

great grandson of Deborah Gannett.

Miss Louisa S. Crosby,

Charles S. Curtis, Pond St., Sharon.  
constable.

Miss Marion A. Davenport, Ames St.

Mrs. Elizabeth C. Dennett, No. Main St.

wife of Dr. Geo. A. Dennett, old Philip Curtis house.

Rev. Almon J. Dyer, No. Main St.

pastor Cong. church — of school com.

Mrs. Lizzie J. L. Dyer, wife of A. J. D.

Miss Mary L. Felt, cor. Maple & Summit aves.

Dr. George W. Field, Moose Hill St.

prof. Mass. Inst. Technology.

Robie G. Frye, No. Main St.

Boston custom house.

Edward J. Fuller, Viaduct St.  
selectman.

Mrs. Helen E. Gannett, East St.  
widow of Benjamin Gannett, a  
grandson of Deborah Gannett.

Mrs. Isaac Bradford Gannett,  
widow of Isaac B. Gannett who  
was a great grandson of Deborah.

Myron Gilbert, Stoughton.  
grandson of Deborah Gannett.

Miss Ruby M. Gilbert, Stoughton.  
great granddaughter of Deborah Gannett.

Joseph Goddard, Viaduct St.  
People's National Bank, Boston.

Miss Faith Goddard, Viaduct St.

Charles E. Hall, So. Main St.

Miss Mary A. Hall, So. Pleasant St.

Mrs. William Hall, " " "

Miss Martha W. Hanley, Wood St.

William L. Haskel, Chestnut St.

Mrs. Myra B. Hatch, Whitman.

Regent of Deborah Sampson chapter  
of Daughters of American Revolution.

Harry M. Hight, Maple Ave.

Editor of Sharon Advocate.

Mrs. Harry M. Hight, Maple Ave.

Albert D. Holmes, Summit Ave.

water commissioner.

Mrs. Edith Bradford Johnson,

gr. gr. granddaughter of Deborah Gannett.

George Kempton, Pond St.

Mrs. George Kempton, " "

Miss Dora M. Leonard,

H. Frank Leonard, Pond St.

Mrs. Mary Gannett Leonard, wife of H. F. L.

gr. granddaughter of Deborah Gannett,

Mrs. Mary A. Livermore, Melrose.

John W. Mackintosh, Walnut St.

William R. Mann, East St.

Mrs. Julia A. Mann, wife of W. R. M.

Loring M. Monk, East St.

school com. — board of health, — trustee pub. lib. —

gr. grandson of Deborah Gannett,

Mrs. Loring M. Monk, East St.

Rodney E. Monk, son of L. M. M. " "

gr. gr. grandson of Deborah Gannett.

Miss Edythe L. Monk, dau. of L. M. M.

gr. gr. granddaughter of Deborah Gannett.

Mrs. Frank G. Moody, East St.

gr. granddaughter of Deborah Gannett,  
and living in the Gannett homestead.

Miss Velina F. Myrick, Pleasant St.  
teacher in Lonsdale, R.I.

William H. Partridge, Newton.

Miss Carrie L. Perkins, Pond St.

G. Webster Pettee, Pleasant St.

water commissioner — of Pettee & Colburn.

Mrs. Myra F. Pettee, wife of G. W. P.

Miss Carrie J. Pickens, Brockton.

Silas Poole, No. Main St.

Mrs. Silas Poole, " " "

Mrs. Mary A. Potter, Station St.

James N. Pringle, Pond St.

principal of high school.

Mrs. James N. Pringle, " "

Timothy F. Quinn, So. Main St.  
selectman.

Mrs. Timothy F. Quinn, " " "

Alfred S. Roe, Worcester.

Frank E. Rollins,  
reporter, Boston Herald.

Horace S. Shepard, Ames St.

sec. Shepard & Morse Lumber Co., Boston.

Mrs. Anna M. Shepard, wife of H.S.S.

Solomon B. Stebbins, Boston.

Court House.

Gilas A. Stone, Billings St.

selectman.

Mrs. Mary L. Stone, wife of S. A. S.

Mrs. Leonora M. L. Stuart,

Edmund H. Talbot, Maskewicutt St.

attorney at law, Boston.

Eugene Tappan, So. Pleasant St.

asst. register of probate, Boston.

Miss Muriel Tappan, So. Pleasant St.,

Charlotte A. Taylor, Boston.

Miss Harriette H. Tinkham, "

Ernest L. Waitt, "

The Associated Press.

Edward H. Warren, So. Main St.

Mrs. Edward H. Warren, " " "

Raymond Warren, " " "

Mrs. Eliza L. White, Chestnut St.

John F. White, reporter, Maple Ave.

George H. Whittemore, Chestnut St.  
town clerk.

Mrs. Elsie A. Whittemore, wife of G. H. W.

Miss Adelaide Witherington, Melrose  
secretary to Mrs. Livermore.

Edward B. Wolston, Maple Ave.

Mrs. Emily O. Kimball, Chestnut St.

wife of Rev. John C. Kimball, pastor  
Unitarian church.

Eugene Tappan acted as  
toastmaster, and proposed the following  
toasts — Deborah Sampson, the rose  
of Sharon — The peerless dames of  
the past, may we ever keep their mem-

ory green — Deborah Sampson's motto, "I was there" — Woman, God's last and best act of creation — Deborah Sampson Gannett, among the first of her sex in the field and on the platform — Sharon of one hundred years ago, she was little, but she was there.

Mrs. Mary A. Livermore was the first speaker. She mentioned her great interest in Deborah Sampson which had attracted her to Sharon, although in coming she had to decline an invitation to the reception given the same evening in Boston to Rev. Dr. Edward Everett Hale on the occasion of his eightieth birthday. Deborah Samp-

son encountered many more difficulties than the ordinary soldier when she served in the revolutionary army. Of all the public women of the past, said Mrs. Livermore, Deborah Sampson has a fascination for me that none other ever had. The call was for men, men, men. The women were left at home to carry on the farms. Deborah Sampson was fired in her own soul. She took no one into her confidence. It was never discovered for three years that she was a woman. In those years she was fighting, fighting with the bravest. And she was keeping her own counsel, she was close-

mouthed. I tell you, I admire a woman who can hold her tongue. If there is a woman in my acquaintance who is telling not only all she knows but that which she doesn't know, I give her a wide berth; I keep as far away from her as possible.

After her war experiences, Deborah Sampson came home. She married and settled down. It was a hard battle for her to become a public speaker. Wendell Phillips, the great orator, felt this difficulty. I was once assigned a seat on the platform where Mr. Phillips was to address a large meeting, and I shook hands and

spoke with him in the ante-room. I noticed that his hands trembled, and I asked him, "Are you ill, Mr. Phillips?" He was surprised at the question, and I explained that his hands were trembling. He answered, "If any one can go before 2800 people to speak and not tremble in his hands and knees, I am not the man."

But one woman before Deborah Sampson had ever spoken on the public platform, Anne Hutchinson, who was a reformer, and reformers are never very welcome. And one thing only I feel sorry for, and that was that Deborah Sampson saw fit to

apologize for what she had done when she came to tell the story of her war experiences. If war is right, then woman has a right to engage in it. It is not a question whether woman has a right to fight, but whether or not war is right. That is the question that must be decided first.

At the close of her remarks, Mrs. Livermore left the hall with her secretary Miss Adelaide Witherington to take the 9-01 train for Boston. All the company rose and remained standing and cheering until Mrs. Livermore had passed out of the hall.

Some extracts from the

diary and address of Deborah Gannett were read by her great granddaughter, Mrs. Susan G. Moody, wife of Frank G. Moody. Mrs. Moody lives in the Gannett mansion on East street where she was born, and which has been uninterruptedly occupied by her family in direct descent from Deborah Sampson, the first occupant.

One extract read from Mrs. Gannett's diary was the following.  
1802, May 3d. I took stage in Dedham. Rode to Providence in company with Mr. William Billings and lady. This polite gentleman and lady showed every mark of genuine

friendship. They invited me to take tea with them at our arrival. I informed these generous people of my wishes in making a public appearance either in Mr. Amidon's hall or in the theatre. Mr. B. informed me that he wished to do every thing that lay in his power to assist me, and appeared to be much pleased in reading the bill of my performance in the theatre at Boston. I conveyed my letters of recommendation to Mr. Wheeler, and this gentleman, Mr. Wheeler, came immediately and he advised me to perform in Mr. Amidon's hall, and finally I gave him my bill of the performance

in Boston. He printed my bill and they were set up in the most public places in the town, and Wednesday evening was to be the first of my performance. But I was quite unfortunate indeed, for I was taken quite unwell, and of course was obliged to postpone my exhibition until Thursday evening.

May 5. When I entered the hall, I must say I was much pleased at the appearance of the audience. It appeared from almost every countenance that they were full of unbelief—I mean in regard to my being the person that served in the Revolutionary Army.

Some of them which I happened

to overhear swore that I was a lad of not more than eighteen years of age. I sat some time in my chair before I rose to deliver my address. When I did, I think I may with much candor applaud the people for their serious attention and peculiar respect, especially the ladies.

The reading was attentively listened to, and at its close "America" was played by the orchestra, whereupon the company stood and sung the stanza, "My Country, 'tis of thee."

After all were again seated, request was made for those to rise who were descended from Deborah

Sampson or connected with descendants by marriage. Fourteen accordingly arose.

A message of greeting was sent from the meeting to the assemblage of persons met to congratulate Edward Everett Hale on his 80th birthday.

Hon. Alfred S. Roe, of Worcester, addressed the meeting, and said in part:

Mr. Toastmaster and friends, I esteem it a particular honor to have a part in the exercises of this evening. I have had the pleasure of appearing in this hall on former occasions, and I am ever pleased to meet your representative citizens, some of whom I have known intimately in

other places; but to come down from our central city to speak a word in praise of the memory of departed valor and devotion is to me a special privilege.

I have brought with me this copy of "The Female Review, or Life of Deborah Sampson", though my labor may be much like carrying coals to Newcastle, for every one in Sharon, at least, has a right to be well posted as to all the facts in the heroine's life. I bought the volume many years ago, and, as you will see, gave it this excellent covering, deeming it, even then long before I realized how near I was to the former home of the

soldier, worthy the best dress my binder could give it. Within I read that it is No. 55 of the 250 small quarto copies put forth in 1866.

Long ago I formed my opinion of the young Massachusetts maiden who was willing to leave home and kindred for the exacting career of a soldier and afterwards to take up <sup>again</sup> the burdens of womanhood. Some one might ask if Worcester has any direct interest in the story of Deborah Sampson; and when I state that she enlisted in Uxbridge and was mustered in, in our city, going thence to her service on the banks of the Hudson, you will discover that we have

a right, in the Heart of the Commonwealth, to claim just a little part in the glories of her memory. Then too when she had gone out upon that lecturing tour, the centennial of whose beginning we celebrate to-night, Worcester was one of the places favored with one of her talks. The Spy of July 21, 1802 has this reading notice;

"Mrs. Gannett's Exhibition. The Ladies and Gentlemen of Worcester are respectfully informed that Mrs. Gannett, the celebrated American Heroine, who served nearly three years in our Revolutionary Army, will, at the request of a number of respectable characters, deliver

an address to the inhabitants of the town, in the Court House, to-morrow at 5 o'clock P.M. Tickets may be had of J. Thomas, Jun., price 25 cents - children half price."

Among the "respectable characters" who requested the address, I love to think that there were present to hear her, Captain Benjamin Flagg who on the 19<sup>th</sup> of April 1775 had marched away with his Minute Men to Concord, a large number of the one hundred and fifty soldiers who on that day followed him and Colonel Timothy Bigelow to the field. Doughty Levi Lincoln Sr. for so many years

a weighty factor in the affairs of Massachusetts, must have been there, and his son, that second Levi, subsequently governor, just graduated from Harvard, doubtless made one of the audience which greeted our Soldier at the Court House.

All this is suppositional, for the Spy of those days was not printed for the purpose of keeping tab on passing events. We search its columns in vain for any description of the appearance of the woman who as a soldier had done manly duty in the perilous days of the Revolution. We of Worcester are also interested in the fact that for several

weeks Deborah Sampson visited in Holden, just north of us, in the home of Captain George Webb, in whose company she served during her soldier life.

You people of Sharon are commemorating to-night the services of a woman whose deeds were out of the ordinary, and I note that the names and faces displayed upon your walls are those of women who dared. Anne Hutchinson suffered for her determination and pointed speech, yet we of today must respect her nerve and courage. Hannah Dustin, driven to desperation by the horrors of her surroundings, took retributive justice into her own hands and gave

her Indian tormentors a taste of their own tomahawks. Mary Lyon did not imperil her life by her innovation, but she did reflect great credit upon her sex by opening the way to higher education to her gentle sisterhood. The wife of Washington, and Betsey Ross fabricating the first flag of her country, are surely significant faces on this occasion.

When, in response to the request, so many descendants of Deborah Sampson arise to indicate their relationship to the distinguished woman, in fancy I see the soldier herself. From one and the other of the sons and daughters I gather up features and form till I

again see the rehabilitated figure of the woman who in man's attire did man's duty till honorably discharged, and then with equal devotion took up the scarcely less arduous duties of the wife and mother. These descendants in their distinguished ancestress have a patent of nobility more honorable than any gained by Norman followers of the Conqueror.

The town too is honored by the possession of such a history. Doubly hallowed is the cemetery which holds her remains. This is a beautiful hall in which we assemble to-night and wherein on stated occasions the people of Sharon gather for the transaction of town business.

As yet it is wholly barren of adornment. Why not at some near date place here the face and figure of the woman whose deeds conferred so much credit upon the town and her sex? Somewhere here may be found space for the reception of such a portrait, and when finished and placed, in addition to a statement of name &c. I would add those words which she herself was wont to use, "I was there". Truly she was "there" in the thick of the fray doing her part and more in the acquirement of the liberty which as a people we so highly prize, but her body is here, in this very town, and her spirit is here, in our very midst,

and should we not make the most of such inspiration and presence?

Mr. Roe's address was very attentively listened to and applause followed its delivery. His practical suggestion to make a permanent memorial to Deborah Sampson, and the repetition of her words "I was there", were received enthusiastically.

Rev. Dr. Adolph A. Berle of Boston was detained at the last from coming, but he sent the speech which he had prepared, which was read to the assembly by Mr. Frank E. Burbank. It was as follows; -

The Historic Spirit in Town Life.

This day adds new glories to the memory of Deborah Sampson Gannett whose deeds and life form the appropriate occasion for this celebration. For this day there is accentuated a fact concerning the town life and the preservation of its history and traditions and the lives and works of its historic characters which it is well worth while to take a moment to think over and determine its value to the people in their daily life. This fact is that the historical spirit in town life is one of the most valuable and effective instruments for gathering together the energies of the inhabitants and weaving them into a compact and progressive pub-

lic spirit; for bringing to the foreground of public thought these events and personages who have done much to contribute to the general prosperity or the general enlightenment and thus furnishing the inspiration and the motive to the perpetuating of a line of noble and public spirited citizens whose first concern shall be the well-being and the successful growth and development of the communities in which they live.

In other days when men were few and communities sparsely settled, the great characters readily became marked in the public estimation and their work was easily discovered. But in our days the smallest community has great and divers-

ified interests. In many of the suburban towns we see the suburban life made only a weak and indecisive copy of the life of the great city to which it is tributary, and thus being neither one thing nor the other. In its life growth, in its public spirit and in its institutions, it has neither the rural nor the city idea. It has not the public devotion and magnificent opportunities of the one, nor the settled character and orderly if slower progressiveness of the other. For the communities like this therefore which are multiplying rapidly throughout New England and especially in the metropolitan district of Boston, it is of the highest importance

that the town individuality shall not be lost.

The most effective way of preserving it lies in the culture and the fostering of the historic spirit. And the first effect of this spirit is that it rescues from oblivion the great names and the heroic deeds of those who, either in the birth days of the town or in its earliest struggles for existence or in its primary endeavors at civic organization or social development, contributed materially to its life. Or again, as in the present case, it takes the life of a personage of exceptional power and heroism, a pioneer as this woman, who made a career so unique and marvellous that it reads like one of the romances of

a long lost age, and brings it forth and tells the story again that a new generation may know and tell it to that which follows after. It is in this manner that life is fertilized and strengthened. It is through these means that the town consciousness is stimulated and developed, and it is through precisely such events as that which calls us together to-night that we find the town life consolidating and mobilizing for better things and nobler work in the future.

History is the great teacher of youth and the great organizer of the consciousness of communities. For a tradition which men hold in reverence

they will do much and sacrifice much. We are in our day seeing this wrought out in practice. Mr. J. Pierpont Morgan remembering that his father was a merchant of Boston, to commemorate that fact gives a million dollars to the Harvard Medical School located in Boston. The New Hampshire towns are everywhere seeing spring up in their midst library buildings, churches, public halls and the like, the gifts of men who have left the old towns and have prospered, but whom tradition and history call back to the birth place, and lead them to leave a substantial memorial of their early struggles or the early traditions which as children they held dear. In this way

Deborah Sampson adds one to the link of events which will foster and help to make strong the pride and strength of this town in its institutions, its youth, and its life, and make those who live here more ready to make its associations uplifting, gracious, and inspiring.

This historic spirit should prove one of the most powerful incentives to the elementary means of producing noble manhood and womanhood. A town that has produced great men and women will naturally wish that succession to continue, and will therefore see to it that it has good teachers in the schools, good preachers in the pulpits, good officers in the public offices,

and seek to have its concerns administered in such a way that it will naturally attract to its borders men of the character which help to perpetuate the right type of citizenship. Most of all, the historic spirit will teach the people to believe in themselves and their own children. May it never be said of Sharon that its young men have to go out of Sharon to be recognized and appreciated. If your young men come back from Harvard or Yale or Amherst or Dartmouth having graduated with honors, let the local citizenship make the most of such men. If your young women make exceptional records in college, and come home with the laurels

and crowns that young womanhood gains so readily and so abundantly in our day, let the civic pride here rejoice in them and honor them accordingly. When your young professional men, your young doctors and lawyers and financiers, as the case may be, come here with their professional training fresh upon them, let them find a community intellectually hospitable to them and ready to welcome their fresh scholarship and their high ambitions for service, and not hinder them in their hopes for recognition in their native town. Nothing damps the enthusiasm of men for their native towns like the remembrance that they had to struggle

against blind and stupid conservatism for recognition when talents and skill were not wanting. Make Sharon a welcome place for progressive men who look forward and lend a hand.

Boston is to-day honoring a great citizen whose consistent and happy task in life has been to serve and inspire his fellow men, and Boston does well to give its crown of honor to Edward Everett Hale. But it should be said that in honoring Dr. Hale Boston honors herself too. She has not grown so large or so worldly that a great citizen is lost in the mob and may pass away unhonored and unsung. No, Boston is still in this

respect true to the great traditions of her earlier history. And she has taken to-day this great commoner, this man who has kept New England history fresh and personal, for these many years, with voice and pen and project, and made him the symbol of her ideals and her aspirations. Great Dr. Hale to be thus honored! Great Boston thus to keep true to a great ideal!

And so to-day we also in this lesser town must take to ourselves the historic spirit. Bring out the old histories and gather up the old tales. Frequently get your citi-

zenship together and rehearse the old stories of heroism, of service of sacrifice and of patriotic devotion. This is a greater capital for the town than real estate values. This is a truer basis for solidarity and power than a big balance in the town treasury. A few years ago the British Museum sent to New England into the Connecticut valley a couple of agents who went up and down the Connecticut river and brought off hand the contents of all the garrets, the old books and papers, which people were willing to sell and of which they knew little and cared less. As a result they carried out of

this country to a foreign land some of the finest Americana which is in existence; and I am told one of the best collections in the world is now in the British Museum in consequence of this raid. If those people had been properly instructed, properly trained, and properly inspired, this could not have occurred. A great local pride would have searched out these things and preserved them or given them to the town libraries for preservation and careful protection. Cultivate history and the historic spirit. Cherish the grand traditions of the past and remember that the future can

only be a glory as the past from which it is to emerge is brilliant and inspiring. Let us thank Deborah Sampson for having taught this lesson to us anew after these hundred years.

Mrs. Myra B. Hatch of Whitman gave an interesting account of the Deborah Sampson chapter of Daughters of the American Revolution, of which she is Regent.

Edmund H. Talbot, Esquire, spoke of old times in Sharon, referring to many incidents in its history. He had lately inquired at Washington of a German clerk in the war department whether the name of Deborah

Sampson was on the rolls. The clerk answered "Deborah Sampson, who was he?"

Rev. Almon J. Dyer was the last speaker, and drew a parallel between Deborah Sampson and the prophetess Deborah mentioned in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> chapters of the book of Judges. She was a judge in Israel, planned a successful battle against the enemy Sisera, and wrote a commemorative song.

Mr. Burbank read letters from Hon. John D. Long, Secretary of the Navy, and His Honor John E. Bates, Lieutenant Governor, expressing

interest in the meeting and regret that they could not attend.

The exercises closed at 10-15 with singing "Auld lang syne."

Next morning some of the visitors went to the home and the grave of Deborah Sampson Gannett.

Letter from Mrs. Zilpha A. Tolman  
wife of Cyrus S. Tolman of Fitchburg.

Fitchburg, Mass., Jan. 29 [1902]

Mr. Tappan, Dear Sir. You  
ask for information in regard to Deborah  
Sampron Gannett. — Most of my informa-  
tion is confined to her life previous to  
her joining the army. — As I stated  
in my communication in the Globe, she  
was bound out to my great grandfather  
when quite young (as the custom was  
in those days), and was brought up with  
his family of boys, receiving the same  
opportunities for an education as they  
did; and while being taught all kinds  
of useful knowledge in the way of house-

keeping, was not looked upon by any means as a servant.

[ Her communication to the Boston Globe referred to, was dated Dec. 13, 1901, and mentions the writer's grandfather Jeremiah Thomas, and says, "He was the youngest of 10 sons of Ephras Thomas of Middleboro, Mass. who all went to war and fought in the battles that made the United States a free and independent nation. Deborah Sampson of revolutionary fame was bound out to my great grandfather, and lived in his family until she was 18 years of age, when her time of bondage having expired

she hired out to another family and soon after donned male attire and enlisted in the army. My grandfather married for his third wife a niece of Deborah Sampson, or Gannett, as was her name after her marriage, and she often related to me incidents of the army life of her aunt and my grandfather, as she had them from their own lips." ]

On reaching her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday she, like most young girls in her position, desired a change, and hired out to Mr. Benjamin Leonard, who lived near the Four Corners in Middleboro in what was then called Borden Hills, about two

miles from her former home. The Thomas boys had all enlisted and gone to the war with the exception of the three youngest who joined the army as they became of age. My grandfather being the youngest was the last to enlist, only five months before Burgoyne surrendered.

As I was told she was homesick & lonesome, and the great topic of conversation being in regard to the war, she formed the plan of dressing herself in male apparel & enlisting, hoping to meet the boys whom she looked upon as brothers. As she had sewed on their clothes from her earliest remembrance, it was an easy matter for her to make herself a suit. The

only difficulty being in finding a place in which to do her sewing and not be detected.

This obstacle was overcome by her taking the children of her mistress out to an open lot opposite the house, and while they amused themselves with their play, she plied her needle industriously. The place which is pointed out to visitors as the spot where she made her suit of clothes is hidden from the house by a high hill. Here she donned her apparel and appeared at the place of enlistment as a fine specimen of a young New England farmer! — I have been told that her sex was discovered by the surgeon who

dressed her wound which was near her breast, and he did not disclose it to her captain or comrades, but hurried to Gen. Paterson, and acquainted him with the facts. He very kindly vacated his tent; she was brought there and a female nurse was procured until she was able to be carried to the hospital. Her discharge was procured and she was sent to her relatives who, my step grandmother told me, were not at all proud of her escapade, but did respect her for keeping her secret intact and retaining her virtue amid the rough associations which surrounded her. — Our family were destined to a long acquaintance with this Sampson family, as my grandfather married Deborah's niece,

Sylvia Sampson, for his third wife, and a niece of Sylvia lived in my father's family when I was a child. Her name was Rosetta Sampson. She was married when she was about 18, and died one year after. On the death of my grandfather, which occurred in the summer of 1842 his widow (Sylvia) went to live with Mr. & Mrs. William Harlow of Lakeville who were relatives. After their deaths she came to me and spent the years of 1848 & 49 in my house. Going to Bridgewater on a visit to cousins she was taken sick and died there — I hope I have not wearied you with my long drawn out letter. It is said that as we grow old we grow garrulous. So, if my letter has

been too long, you must lay it to my age,  
which is 72 years. Yours respectfully,  
Mrs. C. S. Tolman, 27 Payson St.

Letter from Hon. John D. Long.

Navy Department, Washington,  
March 24, 1902. Dear Sir: I am in  
receipt of your letter of the 22nd instant  
in which you kindly invite me to attend  
the dinner to be given in the Town Hall on  
the evening of the 3rd proximo, in commem-  
oration of the 100th anniversary of the lect-  
uring tour of Deborah Sampson, and I regret  
that as I do not expect to be in Massachusetts  
at that time, I shall not be able to accept.

I beg to thank you, however, for

your courtesy, and with cordial good wishes  
for the occasion, I am, Very truly yours,

J. D. Long.

Mr. F. E. Burbank, No. 987 Washington Street,  
Boston, Massachusetts.

Letter from Lieut. Gov. John L. Bates.  
Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Council  
Chamber, Boston, Mar. 14, 1902.

Dear Mr. Burbank:— I have at hand your  
cordial invitation to the dinner to be given  
in the Sharon Town Hall on April 3rd in  
commemoration of the one hundredth anni-  
versary of the lecturing tour of Deborah Samp-  
son Gannett. I should be pleased to be  
present on this somewhat unique, but very

interesting occasion, but I find that other engagements will not permit. That evening I have agreed to be at Symphony Hall at the exercises to be held in honor of the eightieth birthday of Dr. Hale. Thanking you, I remain, yours sincerely, John L. Bates.

F. E. Burbank, Esq., 987 Washington St., Boston.

From Willard's History of Greenfield, Mass. page 160. (1838).

St. Calvin Munn. This venerable and veteran soldier of the Revolution settled in this town soon after the war, and was for a long series of years the host of the traveller and wayfaring man. — The spring after the second three years men joined the army,

he was selected as drill sergeant to teach the recruits who joined the 4<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts regiment, the first rudiments of discipline. Among the number was a young girl of about twenty, who enlisted under the name of Robert Shurtleff, but whose real name was Deborah Sampson. She was prompt and expert, and did her duty faithfully as a soldier. No one in the regiment probably suspected her to be a female. In the fall of the year after those who enlisted during the war were discharged, the regiment she belonged to was sent to Philadelphia, where she was taken sick, was deranged, and by the character of her symptoms the physician discovered her sex. She was dressed accord-

ingly and sent home to her friends and married a Mr. Gannett. A novel was written soon after the war of which she was the heroine, not one fourth part of which is true. She was not wounded as is therein related.

[The book referred to is probably "The Female Review" (page 44). A copy is in the Sharon public library.]

Extract from the "Annals of Sharon" written by Jeremiah Gould in 1830, delivered in the form of lectures before the Lyceum then organized in Sharon. The book is in the possession of Mrs. George Kempton of Sharon. Benjamin Gannett mentioned in the extract was the father of Benjamin

Gannett, junior, who married Deborah Sampson.

I will digress here to pay a just tribute to the memory of Mr. Benjamin Gannett, a wealthy farmer, whose liberality and zeal in the cause of liberty were unparalleled in this town.

Whenever an order was received for beef or clothing for the army, Mr. Gannett was always foremost in procuring it. Many times he bought cattle, killed them and furnished the quantity of beef required, and when the money was raised and paid him, it would hardly reimburse the tenth part of the cost.

He usually raised an abundance of grain, but so liberal was he of it that

scarcely a year passed during the war but  
he would be obliged to buy for his own family  
before the end of the season.

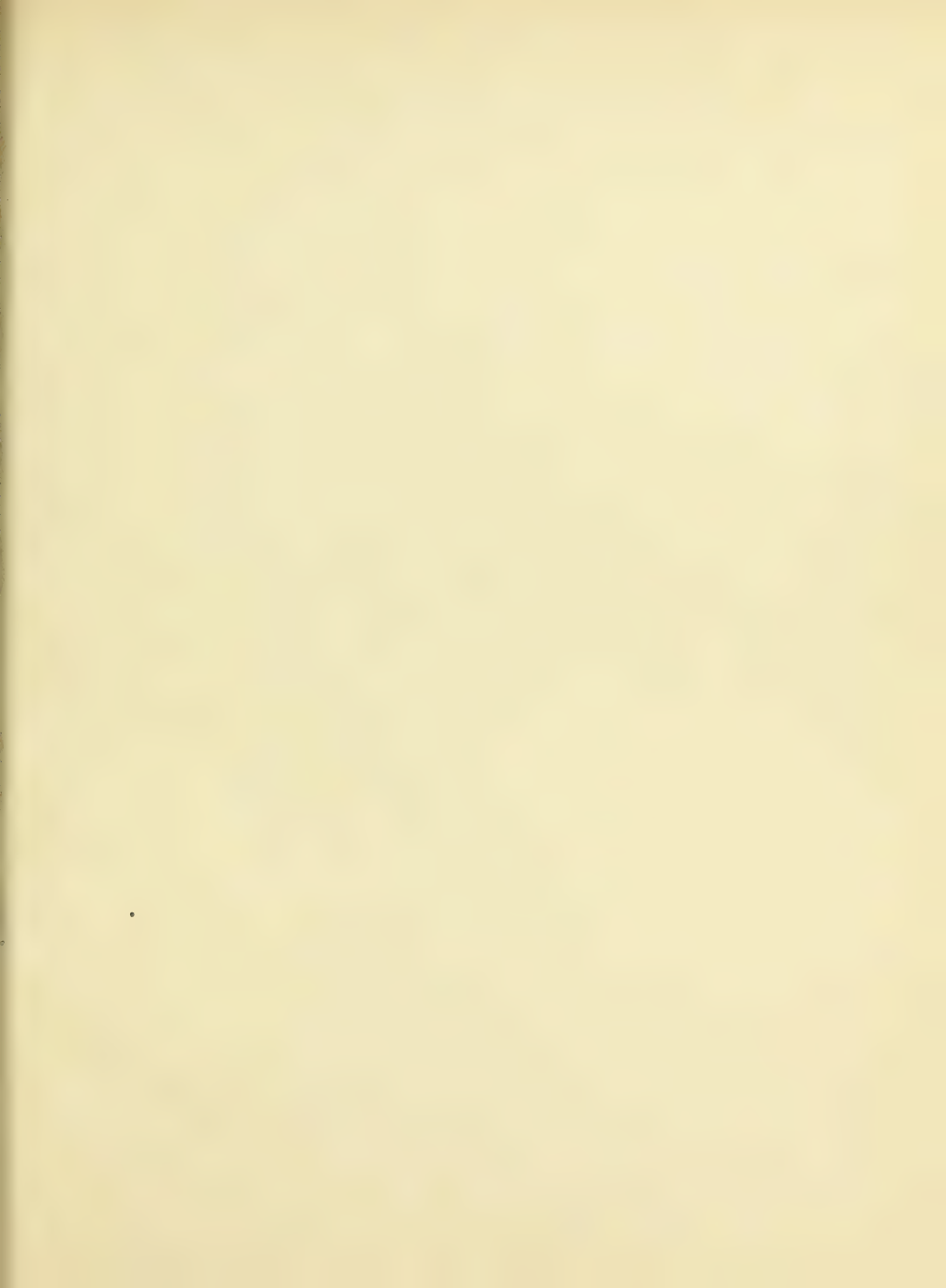


















1802.

1902.



DEBORAH SAMPSON GANNETT DINNER,

SHARON TOWN HALL.

—APRIL 3, 1902.—

## Deborah Sampson Gannett Dinner.



In commemoration of the successful lecturing tour undertaken in 1802, by Deborah Sampson Gannett, of Sharon, Massachusetts, the veteran Continental woman soldier, a Banquet by W. K. Howe, Caterer, will be served in the Sharon Town Hall, on THURSDAY EVENING, April 3, 1902, accompanied with instrumental music and appropriate after-dinner addresses.

Reception at 6.30; Dinner at 7 o'clock.

TICKETS, \$1.50 EACH.

Apply early to the Committee for tickets and any further information.

EUGENE TAPPAN,  
FRANK E. BURBANK,  
TIMOTHY F. QUINN,  
MRS. EDWARD H. WARREN,  
LORING M. MONK,  
COMMITTEE.

Sharon, Mass., March 10, 1902.

Trains from Boston, South Station, arrive in Sharon at 12.59, 2.59, 4.59, 5.21, (express), 5.59, 6.21, (express), 6.59, and 7.21, (express) P. M. Distance 18 miles. The trip occupies 27 minutes by express train, and 44 minutes by accommodation train.

Trains leave Sharon for Boston at 9.01 and 11.01 P. M. Morning trains leave Sharon for Boston at 6.14, 7.02, 7.52 (express), 8.02, 8.40 (express), 9.02 and 11.02.

Sharon electric cars run two miles to "Cobb's Tavern," there connecting with electrics for Canton and Norwood, or for Stoughton. At Stoughton, connection is made with Brockton electrics.

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Visitors to Sharon may choose to take further time and visit the home and the grave of Deborah Sampson Gannett. Accommodations can be secured by writing to the Sharon House or Glendale House.

SKETCH  
OF  
SHARON VILLAGE  
MASSACHUSETTS. 1902.

